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# A Parents Guide to Vaping

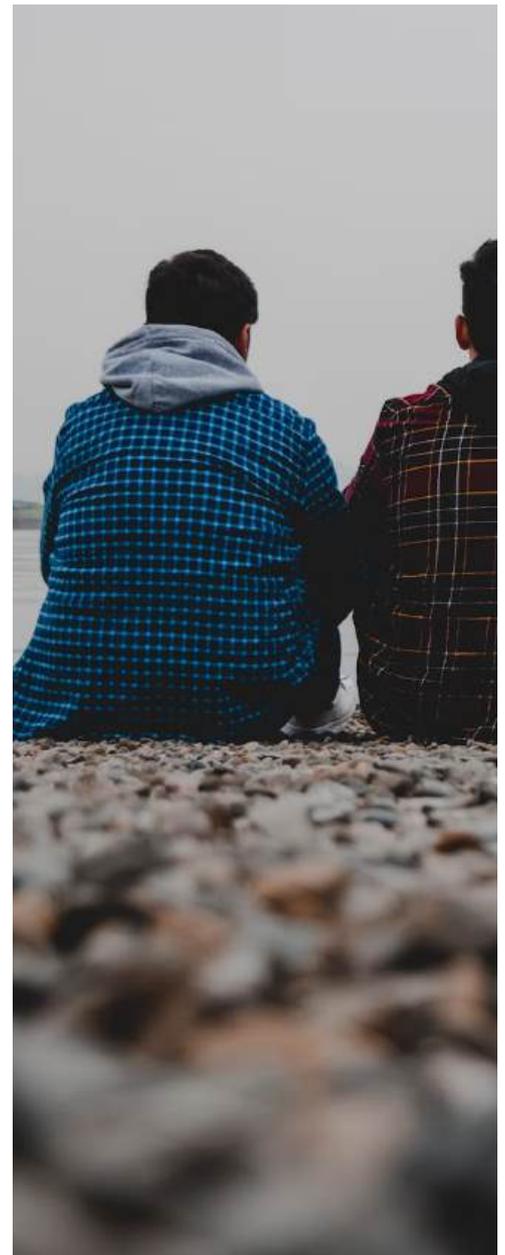
HOW TO SPEAK TO YOUR CHILD IN A  
COMPASSIONATE,  
NON-JUDGEMENTAL WAY



# WHAT'S IN VAPES/E-CIGS?

## The main substances in Vapes are:

- **Nicotine** - the very addictive and active substance that acts on the brain
  - **Propylene Glycerol (PG)**
  - **Vegetable Glycerine (VG)**
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- PG and VG are found in food additives, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals, where they are recognised as generally safe to use, but the effects of inhalation are unknown, and **can provoke short-term breathing issues like coughing, wheezing, and shortness of breath.**
  - Vapes also contain heavy metals like lead, acrolein, and when heated too high, **formaldehyde - a cancer forming chemical.**
  - These are all **damaging to the body and brain**, including nicotine, especially in young people given they are in the development stage
  - At least 20 chemicals **have been found in vape juices** - this changes to 60+ after heating the liquid into the inhaled aerosol.



# HOW ADDICTIVE IS VAPING?

Fact



Nicotine is **the third most addictive drug** behind heroin and cocaine

- This makes it very easy to become hooked, and very difficult to quit.
- The favoured choice of vapes by children and young adults contain 20% nicotine - the highest you can legally obtain in the UK.

The flavours, from sweet , dessert, to fruity and many more also add to the attraction, clearly marketed towards children (no matter what the vape companies say).

# WHAT ARE THE HARMS OF VAPING?

Fact



**There are two main categories of harms from vaping**

## 1 The Knowns

Vaping can exacerbate underlying lung conditions, such as asthma, and cause lung irritation, coughing, and a tight chest. Children's brains continue to grow and develop until the age of 25.

**They are therefore particularly susceptible to the effects of nicotine:**

- **Mental health issues:** increased rates of depression and anxiety.
- **Brain impairment:** attention, learning, memory, and impulse control.
- **«Gateway Effect»:** to smoking and illicit drugs, and other addictive behaviours due to changes in the «reward pathway» of the brain, driven by the hits of the feel good chemical dopamine.

## 2 The Unknowns

- Despite being commercially available in the UK since around 2014, the long-term harms are still yet to be studied.
- Until studies have been done, **we simply do not know.**
- A large 100,000 child study of 8-18 year olds to assess the impact of vaping over 10 years is underway
- But that doesn't help us NOW.
- **The safest thing is simply: not vaping at all.**



## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS MY CHILD COULD BE VAPING?

Vapes come in lots of different shapes and sizes.

However, the vape of choice in children and young adults is the new «semi-disposable» vapes – what I like to call them as they look exactly the same as the old, now banned, disposable vapes, but you can now recharge them, refill them (or buy new pods), and reuse them.

### Physical

- Coughing
- Sore throat
- Breathing difficulties
- Wheezing
- Smells or scents
- Chest tightness

### Psychological

- Anxiety
- Mood swings
- Low mood
- Irritability
- Behavioural changes
- Inability to concentrate

### Social

- Absenteeism from school
- Change of social group
- Rebellious behaviour
- Teacher concerns
- Peer-pressure resulting in use

### Addiction

- Secretive behaviour
- Getting anxious if you leave the house and they've «forgotten something»
- Early-morning behavioural changes (signs of withdrawal)

One sign in itself does not imply your child is vaping – but the more signs they are displaying, the more you should seriously consider speaking to them about the possibility they may be vaping, in a compassionate, non-judgemental way.

# HOW DO I START THE CONVERSATION?

**Creating a safe space for your child to discuss vaping is key**

It's not about catching them doing something wrong or assigning blame - it's about helping them make informed choices.

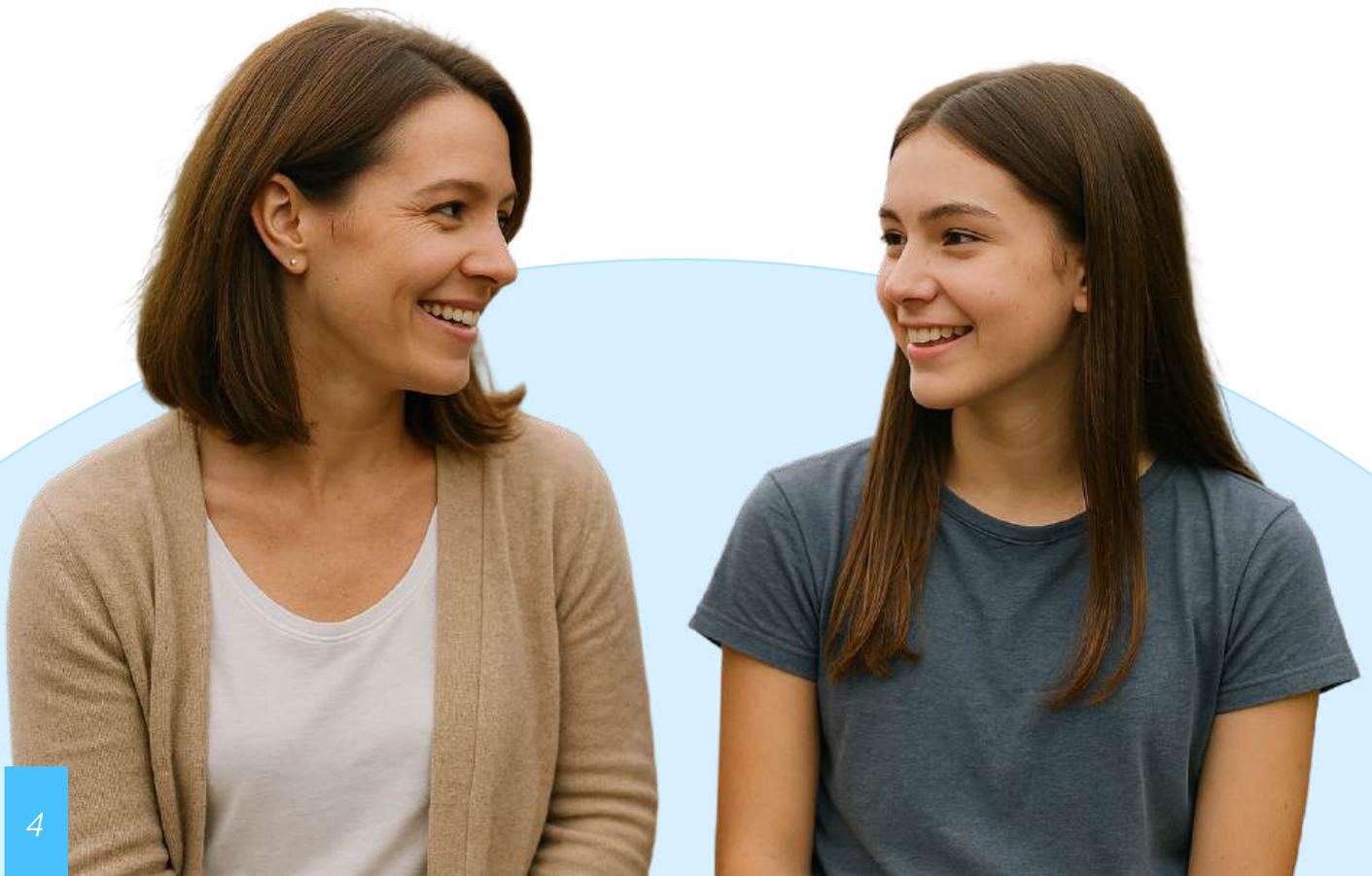
Your child should feel they can approach you without fear of judgment or punishment, and a reciprocal approach should be adopted by parents.

**Start by asking open-ended questions like:**

- Have you or your friends heard much about vaping?
- What do you think about it?
- What would you do if offered a vape?
- Have you seen anyone vaping at school?

**Open Communication Matters**

- These questions can open the door to more in-depth conversations, allowing your child to share their experiences or opinions without feeling judged.
- Remember to keep your tone calm and supportive throughout
- Avoid any extremes eg "vaping can cause cancer" (we don't know this either way yet) or by punishing them.

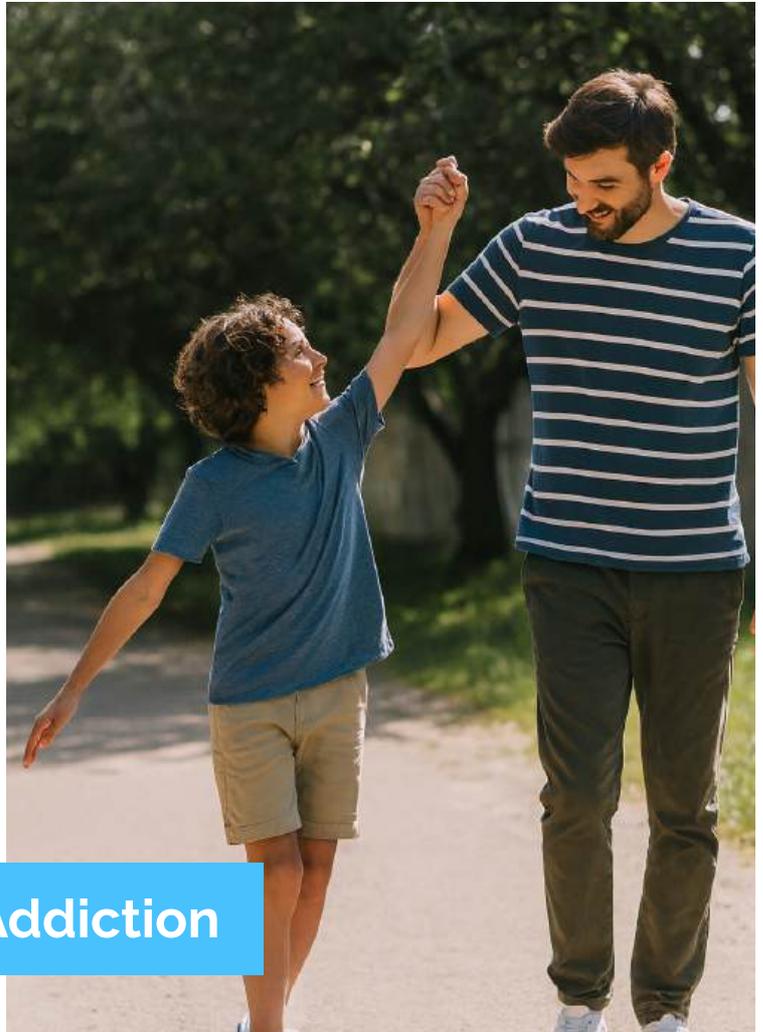


# HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD IN QUITTING?

A calmer approach will make them more likely to listen and engage.

Offer your support and make it clear that you want to help them quit rather than punish their habits.

Taking a step-by-step approach will help you to structure the conversation, before adapted to how it goes.



## 1

### Discuss Nicotine Addiction

- Start by educating your child on how easy it is to become dependent on nicotine through vaping. Normalise it by saying this is the case not just for children, but adults too.
- Many young people aren't aware of the addictive nature of vaping, especially when it's marketed as a safer alternative to smoking.
- If your child expresses a readiness to quit, try to develop a quit plan with them.
- If they tell you they aren't going to stop, this isn't the end of the matter. By remembering to remain calm, non-judgemental, and not punishing them, it enables their trust that they can always come back to you, and you can always revisit the subject at a later stage. This is key.



## 2 Identify Triggers

- Help your child pinpoint when and why they vape.
- Is it something they do out of boredom, stress, or peer pressure?
- Do they vape only when socialising with friends? Or around exam time?
- Recognising these triggers can make it easier to break the habit.
- Once you know what prompts them vaping, you can work together to develop strategies to avoid or manage these triggers.



## 3 Replace the Habit

- Encourage your child to replace vaping with new healthier distractions.
- Having an alternative to turn to when cravings hit can greatly increase their chances of success.
- There are many strategies that can be used, but using a 'double pronged' approach is important - vaping is not just a chemical dependency on the brain, but it's also a behavioural habit of constantly putting your hand to your mouth.
- Having strategies that tackle both of these, occupying the mind and body, will lead to the greatest chance of success.

A few ideas



Take up a new hobby

Socialising outside of circles from children who vape

Exercising (even something as simple as going for a walk).

Teaching them how to cook!

Video gaming can be helpful to distract both their mind and hands

Sketching or drawing

Breathing exercises

See this [downloadable PDF](#) for many more - tailor them to your own child, their personality, and interests.

# 4

## Celebrate Progress

- Quitting can be challenging for both you and your child.
- Celebrate small victories along the way and remind them of their motivations for quitting.
- Whether they're aiming to regain the feeling of control, improve their school or sports performance, these personal goals keep them on track.



# 5

## Having a Support Network

- Helping your child quit isn't something you have to do alone.
- Reach out to other parents, school support staff, or services like [MIND](#) if they are having psychological difficulties.
- Having a trusted network of adults can provide you and your child with the encouragement and resources you need on this vape-free journey.

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AT VAPE ESCAPE, WE HAVE STARTED A  
FACEBOOK PARENTS SUPPORT GROUP  
WHERE YOU CAN LEARN MORE,  
GET SUPPORT, AND SPEAK TO OTHER  
PARENTS.

For more information, resources, and support tools visit  
[vapeescape.org.uk](http://vapeescape.org.uk)



Contact us at: [team@vapeescape.org.uk](mailto:team@vapeescape.org.uk)

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